

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 SSM-03 AID-05 /102 W
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O R 201345Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7694
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
USVISSION USUN NEW YORK 3702
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2241

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, LE
SUBJ: CABINET CHANGE: DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER HOSS

1. PRIME MINISTER HOSS TOLD ME MORNING APRIL 20 THAT, AS I KNEW, QUESTION OF CABINET RESIGNATION HAD BEEN IN AIR FOR SOME TIME. IN FACT IT HAD BEEN CONSIDERED TWO MONTHS AGO AS PART OF A PACKAGE WHICH WOULD START WITH NATIONAL CONCILIATION AS FIRST PHASE, FOLLOWED BY NEW, BROADER CABINET INCLUDING POLITICIANS. FOR VARIOUS REASONS CONCILIATION HAD NEVER GOTTEN OFF THE GROUND, CABINET MINISTERS HAD STILL BEEN ANXIOUS TO TURN RESPONSIBILITIES OVER TO POLITICIANS, HOWEVER, AND HAD SEIZED ON CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE OF APRIL 18 PARLIAMENTARY SESSION AS SUITABLE OCCASION. THEY HOPED IT WORKED.

2. I ASKED HIM IF HE WAS INTERESTED IN CONTINUING TO HEAD
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GOVERNMENT. HE SAID NO, HE WOULD MUCH PREFER TO QUIT. HE HAD HAD NO TIME TO SEE HIS FAMILY EVER SINCE HE TOOK THE JOB AND IT WAS AFFECTING HIS HEALTH (HE HAS ASTHMA). I SAID HE HAD BROUGHT A REFRESHING INTEGRITY AND HONESTY TO THE POSITION AND WE WOULD REGRET VERY MUCH HIS DEPARTURE, BUT I COULD CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND HIS FEELINGS.

3. HOSS WAS UNWILLING TO SPECULATE ON COMPOSITION OF THE NEW CABINET AND SAID SARKIS WAS WORKING WITH BOUTROS AND SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT KAMAL AL-ASSAD ON IT.

4. COMMENT. I GATHER THAT DECISION TO RESIGN WAS TAKEN ON SPUR OF THE MOMENT, MORNING APRIL 19 BY SARKIS, HOSS AND BOUTROS. SARKIS IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID HE WAS PLAYING HIS LAST CARD. I TALKED BRIEFLY TO BOUTROS ON THE TELEPHONE LAST NIGHT AND HE WAS IN MOST CHEERFUL MOOD I HAD FOUND HIM IN FOR WEEKS. HE HOPED THAT NEW CABINET WOULD GIVE LEBANESE WAY OUT OF THEIR PRESENT IMPASSE. EVERYONE HOPES THE SAME THING, BUT IT IS GOING TO TAKE SEVERAL MINOR MIRACLES, THE FIRST OF WHICH WILL BE TO FIND A CABINET INCLUDING DIVERSE POLITICAL ELEMENTS WHO WILL BE WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH EACH OTHER. PARKER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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